

# CHP investigates cluster of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 7) investigating a cluster of Legionnaires' disease (LD) cases, involving eight patients, and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

Further to the CHP's announcements of a cluster of LD cases respectively on February 1, 3 and yesterday (February 6) involving five male patients and one female patient aged from 66 to 84, two additional LD cases have been recorded. They included:

1. A male patient, aged 72 with underlying illness, who lives in Kam Pik House, Choi Hung Estate, Wong Tai Sin.
2. A female patient, aged 72 with underlying illness, who lives in Kam Shek House, Ping Shek Estate, Kwun Tong.

Both patients' sample tested positive for *Legionella pneumophila*.

"Epidemiological investigations revealed that the first patient had no travel history in the incubation period (IP) while the second patient had been to Macao during IP. Officers of the CHP has conducted site visits at the two estates and has already collected environmental and water samples. Investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

*Legionellae* are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;

- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

---

## **Public service on Registration Cards for People with Disabilities**

The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) today (February 7) announced that, in light of the extended special work arrangements for government employees up to February 16, persons intending to apply for Registration Cards for People with Disabilities can continue to download the application forms from the LWB's website ([www.lwb.gov.hk/en/servicedesk/forms](http://www.lwb.gov.hk/en/servicedesk/forms)). Duly completed application forms with the required documents can be submitted via the LWB's website by e-submission, or posted to Central Registry for Rehabilitation, Labour and Welfare Bureau, 11/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar.

Enquiries can be sent by email to LWB ([enquiry@lwb.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@lwb.gov.hk)).

---

## **Council meeting not to be held on February 12 and special arrangements for LegCo Secretariat**

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

In view of the severe situation of novel coronavirus infection in Hong Kong and the worsening of the epidemic in the community, the President of the Legislative Council (LegCo), Mr Andrew Leung, decided today (February 7) that the Council meeting originally scheduled for next Wednesday (February 12) will not be held, in order to avoid risking meeting attendees and on-duty staff being infected and to prevent the spread of the disease. All agenda items will stand over until the next Council meeting.

Meanwhile, as directed by Chairmen of LegCo Committees, the committee meetings originally scheduled for February 10 to 14 will not be held.

### **Special arrangements for LegCo Secretariat**

The LegCo Secretariat will implement the following enhanced measures for disease prevention:

(a) the LegCo Complex will be closed from 8 pm each day to 7 am the following day. All Complex users must leave by 8 pm;

(b) persons who have visited the Mainland or arrived Hong Kong from the Mainland in the past 14 days are strongly advised not to enter the Complex; (c) all persons entering the Complex (including Members, public officers, Members' visitors, Members' staff, Secretariat staff, contractors' staff and media representatives etc.) will be subject to body temperature screening. The Secretariat reserves the right to deny entry to the Complex of any persons who refuse to undergo body temperature screening or whose body temperature is higher than 37.5 degrees Celsius; and (d) Members' Entrance 2 and the Footbridge Entrance will be closed.

All public services in the Complex, including the Public Complaints Office, Library and Archives will remain suspended. Secretariat staff will work from home, except those who are responsible for maintaining basic operation of the Secretariat and who are on essential duties.

The aforementioned measures will be implemented tentatively until next Sunday (February 16). The Secretariat will review these measures and make further announcements in due course.

---

## **Companies Registry provides limited counter services on alternate weekdays starting from February 10**

To align with the special work arrangement announced by the Government today (February 7) and to further reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, the Companies Registry announced that starting from next Monday (February 10), the Companies Registry will provide limited counter services every Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the week.

To reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, the Registry appeals to all customers to avoid visiting its office premises unless they require urgent service. Customers can continue to deliver documents electronically or by post. The Registry's services on registration of documents and public search services will continue to be provided electronically through the "e-Registry" ([www.eregistry.gov.hk](http://www.eregistry.gov.hk)), Cyber Search Centre ([www.icris.cr.gov.hk](http://www.icris.cr.gov.hk)) and the website of the Registry for Trust and Company Service Providers ([www.tcsp.cr.gov.hk](http://www.tcsp.cr.gov.hk)).

The waiting time of the counter services provided at the Registry's offices may be longer as the provision of services will be scaled down. The Registry will also take longer time to process the documents submitted in hard copy form.

The limited opening hours of the Registry will be as follows:

Queensway Government Offices – 14/F Public Service Hall and  
One Kowloon, Kowloon Bay

Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
9.30am – 12.30pm  
2pm – 4pm

Please check the latest announcements on the Registry's website at [www.cr.gov.hk](http://www.cr.gov.hk) for any updates.

For enquiries, please call 2867 2600.

---

## **CHP investigating a case of influenza A (H9) infection**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (February 7) investigating an imported case of influenza A (H9) infection affecting a boy aged 7.

The patient has underlying illnesses, who has developed cough and runny nose since February 4 and fever on the next day. On February 5, he was brought to Wang Tau Hom Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic (GOPC) for medical advice, and was transferred to Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) where he was admitted to the isolation ward for further management. He was transferred to general ward of KWH yesterday (February 6) and was transferred to isolation ward of Princess Margaret Hospital for treatment today. He has been in stable condition.

His nasopharyngeal swab tested positive for the influenza A (H9) virus upon testing. Subtyping result is pending. His clinical diagnosis was avian influenza.

Preliminary investigation of the CHP revealed that the patient visited his maternal grandparents' home in Shenzhen during the incubation period, where backyard poultry was kept. However, the patient had no direct poultry contact recently, nor consumption of undercooked poultry, or contact with patients. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far.

"Investigations are ongoing. Healthcare workers of Wang Tau Hom Jockey Club GOPC, KWH and the ambulance service, as well as related patients in KWH, have been put under medical surveillance," a spokesman for the DH said.

"There are various types of influenza viruses. Apart from those which can circulate among humans and cause seasonal influenza, many other influenza A viruses are found in birds and other animal species. Some of these animal

viruses may occasionally infect humans, avian influenza viruses are one example. Avian influenza is caused by those influenza viruses that mainly affect birds and poultry, such as chickens or ducks. Human cases infected with avian influenza A viruses have been identified in recent years," the spokesman explained.

Novel influenza A infection, including influenza A(H9N2), is a notifiable infectious disease in Hong Kong. Eight cases of influenza A (H9N2) had been reported in the past, including two local cases in 1999, one local case each in 2003 and 2007, an imported case in 2008, an imported case and one with the source of infection unclassified in 2009, and one imported case in 2013. No deaths have been recorded so far. Influenza A (H9N2) infection is a mild form of avian influenza.

The CHP will inform the health authority of Guangdong of the case.

"The CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Suspected cases will be immediately referred to public hospitals for follow-up investigation," the spokesman added.

"Travellers, especially those returning from avian influenza-affected areas and provinces with fever or respiratory symptoms, should immediately wear masks, seek medical attention and reveal their travel history to doctors. Healthcare professionals should pay special attention to patients who might have had contact with poultry, birds or their droppings in affected areas and provinces," the spokesman advised.

Members of the public should remain vigilant and take heed of the preventive advice against avian influenza below:

- \* Do not visit live poultry markets. Avoid contact with poultry, birds and their droppings. If contact has been made, thoroughly wash hands with soap;
- \* Poultry and eggs should be thoroughly cooked before eating;
- \* Wash hands frequently with soap, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, handling food or eating; after going to the toilet or touching public installations or equipment (including escalator handrails, elevator control panels and door knobs); or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- \* Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing, hold the spit with a tissue and put it into a covered dustbin;
- \* Avoid crowded places and contact with fever patients;
- \* Wear masks when respiratory symptoms develop or when taking care of fever patients;
- \* Travellers if feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if having a fever or cough, should wear a surgical mask and inform the hotel staff or tour leader and seek medical advice at once; and
- \* Travellers returning from affected areas with avian influenza outbreaks should consult doctors promptly if they have flu-like symptoms, and inform the doctor of the travel history and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.

The public may visit the CHP's avian influenza page ([www.chp.gov.hk/en/view\\_content/24244.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/24244.html)) and website ([www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/global\\_statistics\\_avian\\_influenza\\_e.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/global_statistics_avian_influenza_e.pdf)) for more information on avian influenza-affected areas and provinces.